



RECREATION STEWARDSHIP PANEL

RECREATION STEWARDSHIP PANEL

A NEW MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING MODEL

FOR

FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARK RECREATION

FINAL REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

November 29, 2002

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER



RECREATION STEWARDSHIP PANEL

The Honourable Joyce Murray
Minister
Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection

Dear Minister Murray:

On behalf of the Recreation Stewardship Panel, I am pleased to submit our final report on a new management and funding model for fish, wildlife and park recreation. At the outset, I must offer sincere thanks to my panel colleagues for their expertise and dedication to this project. Panel members put in countless collective and individual hours to ensure all relevant constituent issues were identified and included in our deliberations.

I also want to recognize the contributions of ministry staff and their ability to produce technical material as needed. Without their assistance this report could not have been completed on time, or with the detail we required.

As well, we must acknowledge the valuable contribution of those who made presentations to the panel. Through preliminary discussions, June 25/26, and during our options workshop, August 22/23, we heard many different points of view. The common theme from a vast majority of presenters though was one of encouragement for our work and that we would work diligently toward improving the ongoing delivery of park, fish and wildlife recreation opportunities.

To all those presenters, we thank you for your candor and genuine interest in our task.

It is worth noting the response to the panel's draft report. While many people expressed concern about the short timelines given the panel and its consultation process, we received over 675 written submissions and comment forms. Many of these submissions included multiple pages of extremely well prepared material. Some submissions represented the interests of large organizations and their membership from across the province. British Columbians are clearly passionate, articulate and committed to fish, wildlife and park

management issues. The panel extends its appreciation and thanks to all those who took the time to make a submission and help us with this task.

The breadth of the mandate and timelines given to the panel proved to be challenging. I think you will find, however, the suite of recommendations in this report propose a management and funding model that, over an appropriate implementation time and with adequate government support, will ensure the continued delivery of high quality outdoor recreation opportunities that contribute to British Columbia's environmental, social and economic well-being.

The panel's recommendations for stronger relationships with First Nations had the most wide-spread support of all the recommendations in the draft report. Submissions to the panel clearly indicated a desire for the provincial government to support existing agreements and include First Nations in meaningful consultation and cooperative management processes.

I would like to bring to your attention a few of the highlights of this report that are essential to the success of the recommended model for the management and funding of fish, wildlife and park recreation.

- A strong and virtually unanimous response was support of our first principle:

"The province's fundamental obligation to conserve, protect and restore the natural population distributions and levels of wildlife, fish and their habitats, and to protect the ecological integrity of the parks of British Columbia, will guide the development and management of recreational opportunities."

Clearly, the public wants to see a strong and continuing commitment to high environmental stewardship standards. Adequate funding must be provided by the provincial government.

- The panel has recommended that the Minister remain responsible and accountable for fish, wildlife and park management, with no delegation of authority to a special operating agency or any other such organization. As well, all land designated for fish, wildlife and park recreation must remain publicly owned.
- The panel has recommended a range of consultation processes including standing provincial bodies for fish and wildlife management and for park management. These consultation processes are an essential part of the recommended management and funding model.
- The panel also heard strong support for the continuation of the province's fish culture program. While there may be some efficiencies to be achieved from new service delivery methods, the economic, environmental and social benefits of this program are extremely important to British Columbians. The panel believes that funding for the fish culture program must be available and this service continued without interruption.

- Education and interpretation are a key part of both the conservation and recreation roles of the Ministry. The panel has recommended that fish, wildlife and park education and interpretation be re-established.
- The panel has recommended a new funding model for the Ministry. This model is based on the belief that there are three basic sources of revenue to support the Ministry's mandate. These revenue sources are general taxation, user fees, and contributions. There are three essential parts to this funding model:
 - The panel is recommending that conservation and the protection of fish, wildlife and parks is a fundamental responsibility of the provincial government and that it be adequately funded through general taxation.
 - The panel also believes that services which are required to support recreation should be primarily paid for by the users. The panel is recommending a special purpose account be established to receive existing and new user fee revenue. This non-lapsing, interest-bearing account will provide a direct, transparent funding source for the Ministry's recreation services. As well, the process for setting fees must become more efficient, responsive to operational needs, and reflect the panel's principles. To achieve this, the panel is recommending the authority to set fees be delegated to the Minister.
 - Contributions, the voluntary payments of money, goods, services or time, should be used to support enhanced levels of conservation or recreation.
- Many submissions supported, and the panel has recommended, the continuation of the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund and the establishment of a parallel Parks and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. These funds will receive contributions that support the Ministry's mandate beyond the base level of funding provided through general taxation and user fees. Many individuals and organizations continue to show very high levels of support for fish, wildlife and parks. These trust funds can facilitate and coordinate this support in ways that reflect the contributors' interests.
- Finally, the recommended funding model will require some time to be fully implemented and reach the revenue generating capacity needed to maintain the Ministry's recreation programs. For many of these programs, the interruption of service delivery is not acceptable. The panel has therefore recommended the provincial government provide interim funding to bridge the gap between Service Plan budget reductions and the time required to implement and build the revenue generating capacity required to offset that reduction.

It has been a privilege to work with the other panel members on an issue that each of them, like so many British Columbians, is so passionately committed. The panel members remain available to assist you with the implementation of the recommendations of this report. We look forward to your response to this report.

Original signed by Bruce Strachan

Bruce Strachan
Chair
Recreation Stewardship Panel

INTRODUCTION

In May, 2002, the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection (the Minister) appointed an expert panel to review the Ministry's fish, wildlife and park (see glossary for a definition of park) recreation services and recommend opportunities to improve the existing management model and funding.

This paper provides:

- the background and reasons for the Recreation Stewardship Panel's (the panel) assignment;
- some of the existing policy and direction that guide that assignment;
- the panel's principles and their implications; and,
- the recommendations for a new management and funding model.

THE FISCAL CHALLENGE

British Columbia's fish, wildlife and park resources are without equal in the world. The recreation services provided by the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (the Ministry) - services in parks, hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities, and the provincial freshwater hatchery program - are deeply valued by British Columbia residents and a drawing card for visitors from around the world.

Through the Core Review and Service Plan processes, the provincial government has confirmed the Ministry mandate, which is: 1) to maintain environmental protection standards; 2) to maintain and restore biodiversity; and, 3) to provide fish, wildlife and park recreation opportunities. Ministry budgets have now been allocated to reflect the relative order of priority of this mandate. Budget allocations required for existing protection and biodiversity standards will be maintained. Without new sources of funds, or more efficient delivery methods, recreation services will have to be reduced.

The following Table 1 provides estimates of the direct revenue from Ministry recreation services (fees and licences) and the current estimated Ministry expenditures to provide those services. Table 1 uses the 2002 / 03 fiscal year to illustrate the financial challenges faced by the Ministry. The current estimate of the gap between recreation user fee revenue and recreational expenditures is based on the Ministry's definition of conservation and recreation functions. As shown in Table 1, the Ministry's best estimate of the gap between revenue and expenditures for the 2002 / 03 fiscal year is \$18.7 million (This figure includes both incremental and some non-incremental costs).

MINISTRY RECREATION USER FEE REVENUE & EXPENDITURES
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2002 / 03

TABLE 1

Revenues	Total 2002/03 Expenditures on the Provision of Recreation Services
Parks	
• \$11M retained by PFOs*	• \$11M Retained User Fees*
• \$1M to CRF*	• \$15.3M from Vote (CRF)
Fish & Wildlife	
• \$13M to CRF	• \$17.4M from Vote (CRF)
Total	
• \$25M	• \$43.7M

Gap:	\$18.7 Millions
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Explanatory Notes

- This table includes estimates expressed in millions of dollars for the 2002/03 fiscal year. Figures include incremental (to be borne by user fees) and non-incremental (to be borne by general taxation) expenditures.
- * "CRF" is the Consolidated Revenue Fund.
- * "PFOs" are the non-government park facility operators under contract to the province. The \$11M Retained User Fees are revenue but are retained by the Park Facility Operators and are not available for the Ministry's support of other recreational opportunities.
- Ministry recreational expenditures in fiscal year 2002/03 are estimated to be \$43.7 millions. These expenditures are comprised of both incremental costs (estimated at \$38.2 millions) and non-incremental costs (estimated at \$5.5 millions) (See glossary for a definition of incremental and non-incremental costs). The non-incremental costs include about \$5 millions for annual park capital facility repairs and replacements and \$500,000 for annual fish hatchery capital facility repairs and replacements. As non-incremental costs, these capital repairs and replacements are the responsibility of the provincial government and are to be funded through general taxation. The total gap is \$18.7 millions. In accordance with the panel's recommended funding model, the gap to be paid from user fees is \$13.2 millions. The remainder of the gap, \$5.5 millions, would be funded by general taxation.

The Ministry has estimated that increases to existing fees and some new fees could increase annual revenue, over time, by \$9.7 to \$19 million dollars. See the "Pricing" section (Table 3) for details on these potential increases.

A key point of Table 1 is that the current expenditures exceed revenue. Additionally, the current expenditures are less than those estimated to achieve the provincial government's vision for fish, wildlife and park recreation (described below). The panel's principles, also described below, state that user fees are not intended to cover the full costs of providing these recreational services, only the incremental costs. Incremental costs are those costs directly attributed to use, and include operating and managing recreational services, annual infrastructure repair, and crowding (see glossary). These two points will be more fully explained in the following sections of this report but are important to understanding the financial challenges faced by the provincial government in continuing to provide fish, wildlife and park recreation services.

The public has a keen interest in maintaining and expanding recreational opportunities to use and enjoy fish, wildlife and parks. The provincial government's Core Review directed that the provision of these opportunities has to be less reliant on the general taxpayer and more dependant upon those who most directly benefit from their use. While the provincial government remains committed to conserving and protecting its fish, wildlife and park resources, it also needs to enhance tourism, create jobs, and help expand and diversify the economy of British Columbia.

The panel received many submissions on the economic contribution to the provincial economy made by outdoor recreation participants. The panel recognizes the positive economic impact of fish, wildlife and park recreation. Reports provided to the panel, such as **Economic Benefits of British Columbia's Provincial Parks, September 2001**, clearly describe the type of positive effects fish, wildlife and parks have on the British Columbia economy. Recreation use by visitors to the province brings in special high-valued spending. The panel particularly recognizes that many of the positive effects are derived from capital investments by private sector businesses. Furthermore, some of these benefits are then captured by the provincial government through taxation, specifically income, sales, and property taxes. This has led many participants in panel's consultation process to point out that fish, wildlife and parks "already pay for themselves several times over." The panel agrees with this assessment. However, the panel's mandate relates to direct recreation funding for the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. General economic benefits, or even general government taxation, do not directly flow to the Ministry. This report must be concerned with the Ministry's revenue requirement. Bridging the Ministry's revenue-expenditure gap will require new fees and increases to existing fees. Revenue enhancements through new and increased fees may well be consistent with more efficient and fair allocations of recreation use.

The fiscal challenge faced by the panel was to find new ways to involve all users in paying appropriately for the provision of recreational services and to secure the involvement of all communities and interests in the service delivery. This challenge brings with it a special opportunity to significantly increase both the level of conservation and protection of the province's fish, wildlife and parks, and the support of all those that use and cherish these assets.

THE VISION FOR FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARK RECREATION

The provincial government's vision for the future of British Columbia's fish, wildlife and park recreation was conveyed to the panel by the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection:

Fish, wildlife and park resources continue to be deeply treasured by British Columbians and are a cornerstone of the provincial tourism economy. The province is renowned for its expanding world class outdoor recreation opportunities. Services that support outdoor recreation are supported by the users and are delivered through a variety of public, private, not-for-profit sector and First Nation partners and have direct links to local communities. Conservation and protection of British Columbia's fish, wildlife and parks are not diminished by recreational uses and are a showcase to the world of British Columbia's commitment to sustainable resource management.

The Recreation Stewardship Panel endorses this vision. The panel believes its principles and recommendations contribute to this vision.

User groups and the public have identified two ways of increasing support for the fish, wildlife and park management. Some believe the support necessary to maintain the high conservation and protection standards should come from increased participation. Others believe that support will be generated by enhancing high quality opportunities to use and enjoy the province's fish, wildlife and parks, thereby increasing their economic value.

The panel believes that the richness of the province's natural and cultural diversity creates opportunities to capitalize on both approaches. Increased participation will result in more people who understand and value natural resources and who are committed to supporting their continued well-being. Enhancing opportunities to use and enjoy fish, wildlife and park resources builds on British Columbia's global reputation for excellence in environmental quality. This reputation is a cornerstone of British Columbia's tourism economy and is particularly important to our rural communities.

THE PANEL'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

As outlined in the Ministry's Service Plan, the provincial government is committed to improving the delivery of a world-class recreational experience in a way that is financially sustainable and beneficial for everyone involved, including local communities, First Nations, recreation service providers and the public at large.

The provincial government is also committed to balancing the provincial budget by fiscal year 2004/2005. The three-year service plan for the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection calls for the development of "a new management model for park and wildlife recreation that connects fees with services and opportunities, and allows greater public involvement in decision making." It also dictates that "fewer ministry staff and funds will be directed to providing camping and recreational services such as hunting and angling opportunities (including stocking of lakes and rivers) where recreational use is low or costs cannot be recovered (cost recovery will be largely dependent on the management and funding model adopted for parks, and hunting and angling)."

To that end, the Minister appointed an expert panel to review these services and recommend an improved management and funding model.

REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PANEL

The Minister directed the panel as follows:

- The panel will limit the scope of their work to management and funding issues facing parks, fish and wildlife recreation programs and work within the scope of previous decisions made in the Core Review, Service Plan and budget processes.
- The panel will identify and evaluate options for funding, service delivery and public involvement in the ongoing delivery of park, fish and wildlife recreation opportunities.
- The panel's mandate covers the provision of fish and wildlife recreational opportunities on all Crown land (about 95% of the province) and includes ecological reserves and wildlife management areas, as well as parks.
- The panel will investigate and examine the policy and management frameworks that exist in other leading jurisdictions. This will include reviewing such concepts as the establishment of a supporting foundation or trust and the creation of a governing or advisory authority or board.
- The panel will consult with British Columbians on the options they develop.
- The panel will submit final written recommendations to the Minister no later than November 29, 2002.

The panel's mandate did not include:

- The review of land use decisions on new protected areas, nor changes or deletions to existing protected areas;
- The review of policies and standards for the conservation and protection of natural and cultural heritage values;

- The review of the First Nations' treaty process;
- Issues related to the management of trapping; or,
- Tidal water recreational fisheries.

The November 29, 2002 deadline given to the panel was driven by existing Ministry budget reduction targets which will take place on April 1, 2003. The panel's recommendations need to be available prior to April 1, 2003 to allow sufficient implementation time.

REVIEW PROCESS

The panel held preliminary discussions on June 25 and 26, 2002, with province-wide non-government organizations that have an active interest in fish, wildlife and parks and that could provide a province-wide perspective on outdoor recreation. The Panel also met with a representative of the Summit of First Nations who provided advice on ways of engaging the First Nations of the province. These discussions assisted the panel in the development of its consultation process, principles and options for management and funding.

The panel invited First Nations and province-wide non-government organizations to review and exchange ideas on the principles and options in a workshop held on August 22 and 23, 2002. Comments provided by participants assisted the panel's analysis of the options which led to a draft recommendations report.

The draft recommendations were released to the public on September 15th with a corresponding comment form and a general invitation for public comment. The panel accepted written submissions, e-mail notes and completed comment forms until October 15, 2002.

Throughout, there was a standing opportunity for the public to submit comments and statements of interest. The panel received numerous responses to postings on its website and to newspaper, radio and television events.

The panel accepted written submissions throughout the process. The panel released a report summarising the June 25/26 discussions with province-wide groups and a set of verbatim transcripts of the August 22/23 options workshop with First Nations and province-wide groups. These documents are available from the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection.

The panel received over 615 written submissions and comment forms in response to its draft report. Many of these submissions included multiple pages of extremely well prepared material. Some submissions represented the interests of large organizations and their membership from across the province. The panel extends its appreciation and thanks to all those that took the time to make a submission and help us with this task. The report, *Summary of Public Input on the Panel's September 15, 2002 Draft Report* is available from the Ministry's website: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/wlap/>

Among the submissions received by the panel were many that recognized the value of the BC Parks Legacy Project. The panel recognizes the value and importance of this work. While the scope and purpose of that project was different from the panel's assignment, the extent of public involvement provided a solid foundation on which to base the panel's deliberations. A summary of the BC Parks Legacy Panel's recommendations is included in Appendix 3.

A considerable amount of research was made available to the panel. Household surveys, academic works, Ministry reports and the experiences of other North American fish, wildlife and park management agencies with similar management and funding challenges were particularly useful in shaping the following principles and recommendations.

The summary of the key elements of the panel's public consultation process were:

June 6	Panel website with access to panel information, reports, updates and the ability to sign up on a distribution list or complete an on-line comment form
June 25 /26	Preliminary discussions with province-wide Non-government groups with an interest in fish, wildlife and parks recreation (agenda focused on panel's mandate, and principles to guide development of options)
August 14	Release of discussion paper on principles and options
August 22	First Nations meeting to discuss principles and options
August 22 / 23	Options workshop with First Nations and province-wide non-government groups (agenda focused on principles and options developed by panel)
September 15	Release of draft report and invitation for public comment by October 15, 2002
October 15	Last day for receipt of submission and comment forms
Nov. 29	a. Public release of report on public input to the panel b. Submission of panel's final report to the Minister

THE PANEL'S PRINCIPLES

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The panel began its assignment by reviewing existing Ministry and other agency information and developing a thorough understanding of the scope and complexity of the management and funding issues. As a result of this initial work, the panel realized that a set of principles was required to guide its recommendations and serve as a foundation on which to base ongoing decisions on fish, wildlife and park recreation. It is the panel's belief that good public policy is based on a firm foundation of guiding principles.

The following principles are strongly influenced by the public's long-standing and strongly articulated belief in the importance of outdoor recreation. While there is a great deal of information imbedded in existing legislation, policies, practices and other written materials, the panel consolidated these ideas into a set of principles that covered the specific scope their assignment.

Based on the initial consultations, it became evident that the principles would clarified by an explanation of their general intent. As a result, the panel identified some of the implications of each of the 17 principles. The implications outline some of the potential changes to the current management and funding of fish, wildlife and park recreation.

ASSUMPTIONS

The principles are based on the following assumptions:

- The provincial government will maintain strong legislation with a clear mandate to conserve, protect and restore the natural population distributions and levels of wildlife, fish and their habitats, and to protect the ecological integrity of the parks of British Columbia.
- The provincial government in general, and the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection in particular, have made commitments for the maintenance of environmental protection standards and ecological integrity. The panel's assignment has been based on these commitments. The panel has assumed that the provision of existing and new fish, wildlife and park recreation opportunities is subject to these commitments.
- The principles apply to all fish and wildlife recreation on Crown land, including parks, and to the degree possible, on private land.

- The principles apply to all fish, wildlife and park recreation that takes place on or in terrestrial, freshwater aquatic or marine areas (except angling in tidal waters). These recreational opportunities include all angling, wildlife viewing, hunting and the full range of activities allowed within parks. The term land, as used in this report, applies to both land and water.
- Reasonably priced fee increases will not significantly affect participation rates if implemented over a reasonable period of time.
- Specific exceptions to these principles may occur where consistent with the basic objectives of conservation, protection and access to outdoor recreation, and where such an exception is publicly supported.

PRINCIPLES AND IMPLICATIONS

PREAMBLE

British Columbia's wildlife, fish and protected areas are a unique world asset. Outdoor recreation is a British Columbia cultural trademark. Participation in outdoor recreation based on these assets is a defining characteristic of the quality of life in British Columbia. Recreational use of the public lands and natural resources of the province has significant social, health and economic benefits. Recreation use also enhances conservation by creating a vested interest in protecting these assets.

British Columbia's outdoor recreation opportunities have a reputation for high quality and diversity. The conservation and protection of fish, wildlife and parks are essential to the Ministry's provision of its outdoor recreation mandate. For this reason, the panel has included as its first principle, a confirmation of the Ministry's commitment to the conservation and protection of the province's fish, wildlife and parks.

The Recreation Stewardship Panel developed the following principles as the basis for their recommendations on the management and funding of wildlife, fish and park recreation. Implications of the principles are shown for clarity.

CONSERVATION

- 1 The province's fundamental obligation to conserve, protect and restore the natural population distributions and levels of fish, wildlife and their habitats, and to protect the ecological integrity of the parks of British Columbia, will guide the development and management of recreational opportunities.**

Implications

- The provincial government's priority is clearly identified.
- This principle provides direction for Ministry budget allocations.
- This principle implies a management model that is science-based and that integrates both conservation and recreation.
- This principle includes an obligation for habitat conservation, protection, restoration and enforcement.
- This principle requires an increased response capacity for enforcement and compliance.
- There is a need for an updated park categorization system that describes the purposes, ecosystem protection objectives, and appropriate uses of the different types of protected areas of the province.
- The Ministry's commitment to conservation has been clearly identified in its Service Plan (available from the Ministry website) and will be clearly articulated through initiatives identified in the Ministry's Service Plan, such as the Biodiversity Strategy, Living Rivers Strategy, and Species At Risk Strategy, and other initiatives such as the Freshwater Recreational Fishery Strategy and the Wildlife Harvest Strategy.
- To be effective, this principle requires the cooperation and support of all provincial government agencies, including special operating agencies and crown corporations.
- The type, location or volume of recreational use, and therefore tourism opportunities will be limited by user fees or other methods as necessary for conservation purposes, including the prevention of non-native species and disease introductions.
- This principle will require a process for determining appropriate uses of site-specific locations.
- Determining appropriate services may result in some conflicts, including legal challenges, around appropriateness and acceptable level of impact (including social and environmental impacts).

2 Conservation, protection, restoration and enforcement are the responsibility of government and will be supported by general tax revenue.

Implications

- The provincial government must define and adopt base level of conservation, protection, restoration and enforcement standards and ensure there is appropriate funding and management effort to achieve this base level.
- The public will recognise that the provincial government has conservation as a priority.
- This principle encourages non-government contributions to provincial conservation goals.

- The provincial government will be encouraged to work co-operatively with the federal and local governments, First Nations, industry, educational institutions and non-government organizations to accomplish conservation goals.
- This principle reinforces the provincial government's support of the federal *Species at Risk Act* and obliges it to seek cooperation and funding from the federal government.

FIRST NATIONS

- 3 First Nations have aboriginal rights related to fish and wildlife, as well as interests in parks. The province will work co-operatively with First Nations in developing, enhancing and managing outdoor recreation opportunities.**

Implications

- Given there is a province-wide treaty process underway concerning First Nations' traditional and ongoing rights, the treaty process takes precedence for determining relationships with individual First Nations.
- Existing agreements need to be financially supported and properly staffed by the provincial government (e.g. Muskwa Kechika, Central Region Board of Clayoquot Sound, and park co-operative management agreements such as the Nisga'a Lava Beds Memorial Park Agreement).
- Management of recreational use and access must respect First Nations' cultural heritage and traditional uses. This may limit access.
- In some circumstances, this principle may lead to the negotiation of joint management agreements through cooperative processes.
- Over time, the adoption of this principle will improve recreational management through better relationships with First Nations.
- Mechanisms have to be developed in order to increase First Nation participation in the provision of recreation opportunities.
- Additional costs will be incurred for the province and involve more complex management and delivery systems.
- Implementation will build First Nations' management capacity and provide economic opportunities.
- Enforcement of and compliance with regulations and management goals will improve, especially in remote areas.

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

- 4 Learning about the natural world and our cultural heritage is integral to conservation and outdoor recreation, and its cost will be funded by both the province and recreation users.**

Implications

- Education and interpretation benefit both conservation and recreation.
- The public will be better informed and willing to act on their knowledge to conserve the natural values of the province. An informed public will be more supportive of the value of recreation and conservation initiatives.
- Initiatives aimed at youth participation will develop the environmental stewards of tomorrow.
- Education and interpretation will range from school programs funded by the provincial government through to guided hikes paid entirely by the users.
- Education and interpretation will be restored in parks and fish hatcheries.
- Strong links to educational institutions and informal learning environments will enhance education and interpretation.
- Policy on appropriate provincial government expenditures and user-pay services is required. The user-pay approach, where applied, will be implemented by increasing existing fees (e.g. camping, day use, annual pass fees) rather than imposing separate fees for education or interpretation.
- There will be administrative costs incurred by the Ministry in fulfilling this principle (staffing for contract supervision, policy development, etc.).

CO-ORDINATION, CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

- 5 Provincial agencies with outdoor recreation mandates will formally coordinate planning, management, monitoring, compliance and reporting to ensure consistency.**

Implications

- A province-wide outdoor recreation / tourism strategy for both commercial and public use is required.
- A co-ordinated approach will:
 - Eliminate gaps and reduce duplication; and,
 - Contribute to the provincial government's goal of increasing tourism revenues and doubling revenues to the Provincial Treasury.
- Requires stronger coordination among Ministries and provincial government organizations for:

- Changes to the management of forest recreation sites;
- Changes to the maintenance of forest access roads;
- Increases from provincial tourism revenue; and,
- Increased linkages between fish, wildlife and park management and commercial backcountry recreation tenures under the *Land Act*.
- This principle requires a renewed commitment to work together among government and non-governmental organizations responsible for tourism and outdoor recreation.
- The principle implies a harmonization of the service plans of those Ministries and other provincial government organizations responsible for outdoor recreation and land use.
- Coordination may require legislative change.
- Coordination will result in the more efficient and effective use of existing provincial resources (especially staffing) applied to outdoor recreation and tourism.
- Ministry organizations may have to change in order to achieve a more coordinated, efficient and effective outdoor recreation program.
- Park management plans and other land use plans need to be coordinated.

6 Recreation management will include structured and ongoing mechanisms to ensure public consultation.

Implications

- Management decisions will be more informed and responsive to public interests.
- The public will be more involved and better informed.
- This principle must apply across all provincial government agencies with an interest in, or effect upon, outdoor recreation.
- Explicit consultation processes will entail costs.
- Implementation will require a range of explicit consultation mechanisms to serve specific issues and areas of interest.
- Legislative changes may be required.
- Consultations on regional and local issues need to be guided by provincial policy and goals.

7 The province will pursue partnerships with First Nations, local governments, the private sector, non-profit sector and individuals to increase capacity to acquire land and manage a diverse array of high quality recreation services.

Implications

- Creates opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and volunteer initiatives.

- These partnerships will result in an increased capacity to deliver a more diverse array of high quality services, and dedicate more land.
- This principle emphasizes the benefits of partnerships, such as:
 - bringing in outside funding sources that may contribute to both provincial conservation and recreation goals;
 - diversifying the range public support in a variety of ways (e.g. introducing new users; communicating provincial goals, etc); and,
 - increasing the diversity of recreational opportunities for users (e.g special user needs and interests that are currently not met may be addressed).
- Partnerships have to be mutually beneficial, and may entail some loss of control (risk) by the Ministry.
- The perception that partnerships weaken provincial responsibility or accountability must be carefully addressed.
- There are costs to manage partnerships. Ministry funding and staffing are required.
- Partners may need to be recognized for their contributions.
- Success is directly linked to Principle 6, the need for a coordinated approach to the provision of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities.
- The public will be more involved, better informed and more supportive.

LAND AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- 8 Public land designated for fish, wildlife or park recreation will remain publicly owned, although land exchanges or transfers will be considered where they enhance conservation and / or public recreation values.**

Implications

- This principle complements the conservation principle (#1) by assuring ongoing conservation and protection.
- This principle requires guidelines and a process or mechanism by which exchanges or transfers may take place. A lead agency for these land use decisions (including public consultations) needs to be identified.
- Legislative change may be required.
- Transfers of designated land to federal or other governments may be included.
- This principle needs to be coordinated with provincial policy for First Nation treaty negotiations.

- 9 **Basic public infrastructure for recreation services and access, where provided, is a provincial responsibility and will be paid from general tax revenue. Enhanced infrastructure may be provided by the province and others. Non-government ownership of such enhanced infrastructure on publicly owned land will not confer land ownership in law or in practice.**

Implications

- The panel believes that supply of basic infrastructure must only occur where consistent with park management plans and land use plans
- The provincial government retains responsibility for significant recreation costs to provide basic public infrastructure (see glossary).
- This principle has implications for the continued supply and management of the recreation infrastructure of the Ministry of Forests and the Ministry of Transportation.
- This principle clarifies the provincial government's and users' division of responsibility for recreation supply costs.
- In situations where users are not prepared to pay for enhanced infrastructure, these facilities will not be provided.
- Enhanced infrastructure (e.g. a fishing platform for those with disabilities) may create opportunities for new users and those individuals not otherwise able to participate in outdoor recreational activities.
- Principle 8 is complemented by ensuring that enhanced services do not convey land ownership to the service provider.
- Principle 7 is complemented by identifying specific opportunities for partners to provide appropriate enhanced levels of facilities.
- Infrastructure provided by third-parties will generate liability issues, particularly for a provincial authorizing agency. This issue needs to be addressed.

- 10 **The public will continue to have a right of access to Crown land, including parks, for outdoor recreation.**

Implications

- The provincial government must clarify the public's right of access.
- A process for determining specific policy on exceptions (including public consultations) is required.
- Exceptions to a general right of access may be made for reasons of:
 - conservation, protection or restoration;
 - safety;
 - reasonable business operational requirements and as authorized by tenure, and,
 - maintenance of specific quality of recreational experience.

- Methods for limiting access may include:
 - Fees associated with crowding;
 - Lotteries for opportunities to use;
 - Quotas set for environmental, social or economic impact management purposes;
 - First-come-first-served allocations; and,
 - Reservation systems.
- Many fish, wildlife and park recreation opportunities are dependent on access that is provided and maintained by other agencies, private land owners, and industry. This principle is linked to a need for a provincial access management strategy.
- There is a strong link to Land & Water BC policy on public access on commercial backcountry recreation tenures.
- Where the provision of access incurs operational costs, some of these costs may be recovered from users.
- Provides a public assurance and will contribute to an increased public trust and confidence.

PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE

11The province may contract with, or licence, private recreation service providers where there are no risks of monopoly control or to conservation values.

Implications

- Private suppliers must respect conservation, thus safeguarding Principle 1 (emphasizing conservation takes priority over recreation).
- This principle requires policy and an open decision-making process for determining appropriate uses and locations available to private sector suppliers. This policy must address monopoly control issues.
- New services will occur only where consistent with management plans or land use plans, and following an impact assessment that is appropriate to the scale, risks and potential impacts of the service.

REVENUE AND FEES

- 12 Resident recreational users will pay fees that cover the costs directly related to their use. These costs include the costs of operating and managing the service, annual infrastructure repair, and crowding. Exceptions may be made for access, public health and safety purposes, or to maintain services in locations having provincially significant recreation values. Resident recreational user fees will not cover the costs of providing basic infrastructure.**

Implications

- This principle applies to the residents of British Columbia.
- There will be:
 - new fees;
 - some fee increases; and,
 - a broader range of users who pay fees.
- Fees charged for non-resident users or commercial service providers are addressed in Principles 13 and 14, below.
- Capital infrastructure repair and replacement costs will be borne by the provincial government.
- Fees for “similar” facilities or services may vary because of different incremental costs of the Ministry to provide these facilities or services.
- In some cases, the cost of providing the service (without any subsidy) will exceed the users’ willingness to pay, and the service may have to be withdrawn.
- Policy, guidelines and process are required for determining exceptions.
- Additional Ministry capacity (staffing and finances) will be required to make the site-specific costing decisions required by this principle.
- There will be a need to identify a role for users’ involvement in the fee setting process.
- There will be a need to communicate and explain fee changes (requires an implementation strategy).
- User fees that address crowding costs (recreational user fees that are higher than the Ministry’s operating costs) may be imposed where necessary to conserve or protect a natural or cultural heritage value, or where it is desirable to maintain a specific quality of recreational user experience.
- In some cases, crowding costs will be significant. In these cases, crowding may be reduced by either increased fees (including the use of auctions) or by other rationing mechanisms such as lotteries and “first-come-first-served” systems.

13 Non-resident users will pay fees based on competitive market value for recreational opportunities where this value is higher than the fee for residents.

Implications

- Fees for non-residents will generally increase.
- An efficient, effective and easily administered process to determine market value is required.
- In some cases, the cost to differentiate and collect non-resident fees may exceed the revenue from the competitive market value. Therefore, in some cases, the collection of site-specific costs may be impractical.
- There will be increased administrative costs (e.g. collection system; enforcement; ongoing determination of market value). There will be overhead costs for determining site-specific and market values, and for implementing user fees.
- Implementation of user fees (timing and amount) must be sensitive to the tourism industry as a whole and to specific businesses' needs. Sensitivity is particularly needed when communicating with clients who may have "booked" recreational services a year or more in advance.
- Policy, guidelines and process are required for determining exceptions.

14 Commercial recreation service providers will pay market prices for the right to use and benefit from wildlife, fish and park resources. Existing industrial and private uses in parks will pay market value for their tenure.

Implications

- Mechanisms to determine market value are required. These mechanisms will increase costs to the Ministry.
- Commercial recreation service providers will operate only in areas approved in a park management plan, or where consistent with an approved land use plan.
- Current tenure holders may be affected where these tenures have not been allocated on the basis of market value.
- Existing fees for commercial service providers, and industrial and private users in parks, will likely increase and result in increased revenue to the Ministry.
- Increased costs for commercial service providers may be passed on to users.
- Implementing this principle will take time to accommodate business needs.
- Pricing policy for commercial recreation service providers will need to be harmonized across all provincial government agencies.
- Commercial backcountry recreation tenures under the *Land Act* should be required to dedicate a proportion of their annual fees toward the management of the resources on which they depend. Accordingly, new mechanisms linked to the Land & Water BC mandate, and their legal and tenure frameworks, are required.

- Existing rights, licenses, tenures and contracts must be respected.

15 Revenue from recreation user fees will be dedicated to the provision of recreation opportunities and directly connected to the facilities and services provided by the Province.

Implications

- Provisions will be required to ensure that management decisions will not be motivated to maximise cash flow at the expense of conservation.
- The direct link between user fees and service will have substantial user support and may increase users' willingness to pay.
- Policy and process is required for making revenue allocation decisions.
- This principle requires the creation of a special purpose account within the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

16 Setting of user fees will be delegated to the Ministry to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances while protecting the public interest.

Implications

- Fees will no longer be set by Cabinet through an Order-in-Council process.
- Legislative change is required.
- Implementation of this principle is critically linked to Principles #6, (Consultation) #12 (Fee Amount), #13 Non-Resident User Fees), and #14 (Commercial Service Providers).
- Fees may be changed by smaller increments over shorter periods of time.

17 User fee discounts based on inability to pay or to encourage youth participation may be considered through specific policy, not by compromising the above principles.

Implications

- Some groups will not support changes that result in the removal of current subsidies.
- Some cross-subsidization may occur.
- Policy on appropriate discounts and consistent Ministry policy on inability-to-pay are required for the effective implementation of specific fee discounts.
- The primary motivation for using discounts is affordability.
- More people may become eligible for discounts.
- There will be no discounts for seniors based solely on age.
- There will be no discounts based solely on disability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BACKGROUND

As presented earlier in this report, the Recreation Stewardship Panel's mandate was to provide recommendations on a new management and funding model for fish, wildlife and park recreation that connects fees with services and opportunities and allows greater public involvement in decision making.

The panel's recommendations are grouped by the following topics:

- Endorsement of Principles
- Delegation of Authority
- Organizational Scope
- First Nations
- Outdoor Recreation Coordination
- Consultation
- Partnerships and Volunteers
- Education and Interpretation
- Youth Participation
- Specific Recreation Opportunities
 - Conservation Tests for Outdoor Recreational Use
 - Provincial Fish Cultural Program
 - Fish-Based Recreation on Crown Land
 - Wildlife-Based Recreation on Crown Land
 - Park Recreation
 - Crown Land Recreation
- Revenue Sources and Uses
- Revenue Retention and Allocation
- Recommended Funding Model
- Pricing
- Implementation
- Final Comment from the Recreation Stewardship Panel

Due to the scope of the mandate and the time available, the panel has had to keep its recommendations at a very high level and not get into the implementation detail. The panel has made a few recommendations at a more operational level only where necessary because of the importance of the detail or the public support for the issue. For the most part, the following recommendations should be considered as a framework that provides general direction.

Many of these recommendations require further work before they are implemented. This implementation work may entail estimations of new Ministry costs, inter-agency coordination, and specific public consultations in order to develop program details that are broadly supported and ultimately successful.

The panel also notes that while their assignment was to look at the management and funding of fish, wildlife and park recreation, they could not, in all cases, separate recreation issues from conservation issues. As a result, the panel has included some recommendations specifically related to the Ministry's conservation role.

The interrelationships of the principles and recommendations require they be read and understood as a package. For example, the recommended funding model is based on, and subject to, the principles. A new recreational facility such as a campsite can only be provided if it can be done in a way that is consistent with the panel's first principle on conservation.

ENDORSEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Recommendation # 1

ENDORSE PRINCIPLES

The provincial government endorse the preceding principles and use them to guide all decisions on the management and funding of fish, wildlife and park recreational opportunities.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Authority for the management of wildlife and parks is constitutionally vested with the province. While the responsibility for fish management is within the federal jurisdiction, the responsibility for freshwater fishery management has been delegated by agreement to the province. The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia has the authority to delegate these management responsibilities. The panel considered options ranging from maintaining the status quo, to delegating the authority and accountability to a special operating agency, commission or crown corporation.

Recommendation # 2

MAINTENANCE OF MINISTERIAL AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Maintain the current ministerial authority and accountability.

The panel recognizes that while the delegation of authority to a special operating agency or a commission may result in increased operating efficiencies, it may also result in the erosion of the province's primary responsibility for environmental protection and conservation, especially if this new delegated authority becomes too revenue driven or manipulated by financial or special interests. Compromising the current conservation and protection priorities through a new delegated management authority is a risk the public loudly and clearly is not prepared to take.

Additionally, the panel believes that retaining ministerial authority and accountability will best serve the need to coordinate planning and management activities with the other government resource agencies.

The panel believes Ministerial responsibility will

- *contribute to a public trust for the management of the province's natural and cultural heritage values;*
- *provide a clear accountability for all recreation decisions;*
- *be subject to First Nations legal and treaty rights; and*
- *be based on a strong statutory authority as currently provided by the existing suite of legislation, including the Wildlife Act, Park Act, and Ecological Reserve Act..*

The panel believes that the advantages of a delegated authority, particularly in relation to financial management and funding issues, can be achieved in a traditional ministry organization using the suite of recommendations in this report.

ORGANIZATIONAL SCOPE

Organizational scope considers the range of responsibilities for an organization, or organizations, that are responsible for fish, wildlife and park management. The panel believes that its principles reinforce the provincial government's commitment to the conservation and protection of natural and cultural heritage values over the provision of recreation opportunities. The principles also imply that conservation and recreation initiatives cannot be administratively separated. As a consequence, the panel recommends that the Ministry retain a responsibility for both conservation and recreation program delivery (i.e. no separate recreation management organization).

The panel considered a variety of organizational structures and evaluated their effectiveness and efficiency in managing fish, wildlife and parks.

Recommendation # 3

ORGANIZATION SCOPE

There should be a fish and wildlife management function, a park management function and an outdoor recreation management function within a single ministry.

In recognition of the inter-connected nature of these three functions, they must be closely linked to ensure coordination and eliminate overlaps and gaps. These functions should include responsibilities for both conservation and recreation, including an effective enforcement / compliance capacity.

The functional areas must have a strong regional presence with a direct reporting relationship to their respective Ministry headquarters.

The panel recognizes the need to consider streamlining, simplifying or including the following fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation responsibilities in the same Ministry:

- *forest recreation currently with the Ministry of Forests;*
- *fish, wildlife and habitat inventory currently with the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management;*
- *commercial backcountry recreation currently with Land and Water BC ;*
- *BC Hydro fish, wildlife and recreation programs; and,*
- *the outdoor recreation aspects of tourism.*

Any transfer of responsibility must include an adequate budget transfer in order to support the ongoing delivery of the program.

The consolidation and coordination of these responsibilities would require significant organizational changes, but would result in increased effectiveness and efficiencies in the management of fish, wildlife, parks and outdoor recreation. This coordination is necessary if the province is to capitalize on the growing value of outdoor recreation and tourism in its changing economy.

The panel recognizes the costs that are incurred by organizational change and believes these changes should be implemented only when appropriate and in a way that minimizes these costs. For instance, these organizational changes may be appropriate in the event of increased Ministry funding or when the provincial government as a whole is making organizational changes.

While the panel has recommended the maintenance of strong ministerial authority, it has also identified the need to balance provincial goals and standards with solutions that reflect the special character and interests of the regions of the province.

FIRST NATIONS

First Nations have established legal rights in respect to land use and opportunities to use fish and wildlife. On a government-to-government basis, there are a range of alternatives in which these rights can be respected and opportunities created that enhance the interests of both First Nations and the province. Within this framework, the panel considered ways to involve First Nations in the delivery of fish, wildlife and park recreation opportunities. These include fully supporting existing pre-treaty agreements and new agreements made through the treaty process, expanding opportunities for involvement in recreation service

delivery, and identifying opportunities to be greater involvement in decision-making processes.

Recommendation # 4

ENCOURAGE FIRST NATIONS RELATIONSHIPS

The provincial government use a combination of approaches to engage First Nations in the management, funding and delivery of fish, wildlife and park recreation:

- i. Provide funding and staffing support for existing pre-treaty agreements and new agreements made through the treaty process.**
- ii. Expand opportunities for management involvement and recreation service delivery through new interim agreements or new pre-Treaty agreements.**

The panel believes that closer working relationships between the province and First Nations will result in a number of significant benefits. These include environmental, social, and economic benefits, as well as improved recreation service delivery. Agreements with First Nations must meet the conservation and protection standards as specified in recommendation #16.

Examples of existing agreements include the Muskwa Kechika and the Central Region Board of Clayoquot Sound. The Nisga'a Lava Beds Memorial Park Agreement is an example of a park agreement.

Recommendation # 5

PROTECT CULTURAL VALUES

The provincial government must make strong efforts to consult and work jointly with First Nations to protect culturally significant values.

The panel heard about the degradation of sites and values of special significance to First Nations from increased recreational use, particularly in parks. In many cases, existing laws for the protection of these often irreplaceable sites and values are not being enforced. While not directly part of the panel's mandate, the urgency and significance of this issue is one that could not be overlooked.

OUTDOOR RECREATION COORDINATION

Recommendation # 6

PREPARE AND IMPLEMENT AN OUTDOOR RECREATION / TOURISM STRATEGY

The provincial government should prepare and implement a comprehensive outdoor recreation / tourism strategy.

Many individuals and organizations told the panel about their longstanding desire for a provincial outdoor recreation / tourism strategy that sets out a provincial vision and goals, and is a rallying point for the diverse array of public agencies, commercial providers and outdoor recreation users.

The panel recognizes both the value of a comprehensive provincial outdoor recreation / tourism strategy and the challenges in its undertaking. The panel supports its development as a means of clarifying and supporting the Ministry's responsibilities and contributions to outdoor recreation as identified in these recommendations.

An outdoor recreation / tourism strategy should include all provincial agencies that affect outdoor recreation, and include such elements as:

- *A clearly articulated vision and goals for the public and private supply of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities;*
- *Ways to enhance British Columbia's reputation for high quality and high value outdoor recreation products; building on the qualities of British Columbia's world-recognized image and identity;*
- *A clear identification of roles and responsibilities;*
- *Tourism planning and management;*
- *An access management strategy;*
- *A process to ensure Land Act tenures are issued in accordance with this provincial strategy, land use plans and park management plans, and that includes some public consultation;*
- *A unified marketing plan;*
- *A common internet portal that encourages user awareness and participation; and,*
- *Processes for making local decisions within the context of provincial goals.*

An outdoor recreation / tourism strategy requires public input. It should also be based on the conservation, protection and restoration priority and be consistent with approved land use plans and park management plans.

CONSULTATION OPTIONS

The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection currently uses a variety of consultation processes. The panel heard strong public and organizational interests in opportunities to be involved in decision-making processes. The range and scope of site-specific and issue-specific decisions point to the importance of new ways of using consultation processes that result in outdoor recreation decisions that are mutually beneficial and widely supported.

The options considered by the panel were evaluated on the scope of responsibility, effectiveness of input, costs, and degree of public and organizational interest. As well, the participation and role of First Nations were considered, particularly in relation to government-to-government responsibilities.

Recommendation # 7

ESTABLISH CONSULTATION BODIES AND PROCESSES

Employ a range of consultation mechanisms as a way to reflect the scope and complexity of management and funding issues:

Standing Advisory Bodies

- i. Establish a provincial standing advisory body for fish and wildlife management issues, reporting to the Minister.
- ii. Establish a provincial standing advisory body for park management issues, reporting to the Minister.
- iii. Establish regional standing advisory bodies for fish and / or wildlife recreational use and allocation, reporting to the regional level.

Specific Issue Consultations

Continue consultations for specific issues (e.g. park management plans or the Freshwater Fishery Strategy).

First Nations' Participation

First Nations should be an integral part of each of the above advisory bodies in a manner that is consistent with their aboriginal and ongoing rights.

Support for Advisory Bodies

Advisory bodies must be supported by adequate staff and financial resources.

Appointment to Advisory Bodies

Appointments to provincial advisory bodies be made by the Minister and based on qualifications related to the protection of conservation and recreation interests and ability to represent the public interest.

The diversity of issues faced by fish, wildlife and park management authorities, coupled with the intensity of interests in the management of these resources, dictates a range of consultation processes be used. These processes need to balance a range of public perspectives with the maintenance of the Minister's authority.

The panel recognizes a need to maintain ministerial accountability while making decisions that have strong community support. The panel believes that certain decisions, such as those guided by clear provincial policy and standards may be delegated without compromising Ministerial accountability.

Standing advisory bodies should generally provide advice on issues identified by the Minister. Standing advisory bodies may also be asked for advice on issue-specific consultation processes.

Provincial standing advisory bodies will, and other processes may, provide advice on user fees.

Provincial standing advisory bodies should meet at least once a year.

The implementation of the above advisory bodies requires considerable definition of such issues as appointment criteria, compensation for participants, payment of expenses, term of appointment, scope of responsibility, meeting frequency, group decision-making process, and public communications.

The panel believes that appointments to these advisory bodies be voluntary with no compensation other than those expenses incurred to participate.

While individuals appointed to provincial standing advisory bodies may be affiliated with non-government organizations, their appointment will be as individuals, not as a representative of a non-government organization that represents specific user interests.

Appointments to regional standing advisory bodies will be based on the above-stated qualifications, however appointees may represent non-government user groups. Since the role of regional advisory bodies is to provide advice on the application of provincial policies to local circumstances, the panel believes the representation of user groups will result in advice that has a broad base of support. Regional advisory bodies must nevertheless retain a balance of representation from the full range of interests and perspectives for which they are mandated to provide advice.

The Regional Wildlife Management Process, currently being piloted in Prince George, should continue to be supported and allowed to develop as a model that can be used, as appropriate, more broadly across the province. The purpose of this regional process, initiated by the Lheidl Tenneh First Nation, is to develop the opportunity for First Nations and third parties with interests in wildlife to participate in wildlife management decisions.

The value of First Nations' participation as integral members of the above advisory bodies is recognized. First Nations' participation should be complementary to government-to-government relationships. This participation is subject to First Nations' aboriginal and ongoing rights, and any formal agreement between the provincial government and a First Nation.

PARTNERSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERS

There is a wide range of partnerships and volunteers that have been involved in all aspects of the management and funding of fish, wildlife and parks. The panel heard a strong interest in, and value of, continuing, restoring and expanding these partnerships and volunteer relationships in ways that will result in better recreational service delivery.

The panel considered a range of options on the appropriate types and purposes of partners and volunteers including individuals, for-profit organizations, and not-for-profit organizations.

Recommendation # 8

ENCOURAGE GREATER USE OF PARTNERS AND VOLUNTEERS

The provincial government should encourage greater use of partnerships and volunteers to ensure more efficient or effective service delivery without compromising the public ownership of land or the conservation, protection and restoration standards.

ENCOURAGE BUSINESS PARTNERS' SUPPORT FOR THE MINISTRY

The Ministry should enter into selected partnerships with businesses wishing to support the goals, values and environmental ethic of the Ministry. The panel recommends that the Ministry engage partners that are interested in supporting or funding aspects of the Ministry's mandate for the right to align themselves with the values of the British Columbia fish, wildlife and park "brands."

ENCOURAGE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Encourage research in cooperation with educational institutions that result in support for fish, wildlife and park management.

The panel recognizes that partnerships have to be mutually beneficial. The panel also believes that being mutually beneficial does not necessarily diminish the responsibility or authority of the managing agency. Partnerships should not put the Ministry's conservation responsibilities at risk.

The panel understands that partner and volunteer opportunities may be limited by the availability of ministry resources required to maintain these relationships.

Partners and volunteers need to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in order that conservation and protection standards are not compromised.

This recommendation requires the removal of barriers such as the liability issues that limit the use of volunteers.

A few examples of existing successful partnerships and volunteer programs include:

- *Parks hosts and marine park hosts;*
- *BC Wildlife Federation delivery of the Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Education program;*
- *Ecological Reserve wardens;*
- *Fish in Need Society;*
- *Trail maintenance done by volunteers;*
- *BC Hydro's and Alcan's support of Ministry programs;*
- *University of British Columbia's support for Ministry related fish research.*

PUBLIC INPUT ON FEES

The panel has recommended a principle that users should pay for the recreations facilities and services they use. Key elements in gaining the public's support are a direct and transparent dedication of those fees to the ongoing provision of the recreational facilities and services and opportunities to be consulted on proposed changes.

The panel also recognizes the economic and social value of recreational participation, and the potential impacts from increased fees.

Recommendation # 9

PUBLIC INPUT ON FEES

Changes to existing fees and introduction of new fees must include opportunities for public input.

The panel believes that the provincial standing bodies should have a key role in providing advice to the Minister on changes to existing fees and any new fee. This recommendation does not preclude opportunities for separate consultation processes for special issues.

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Recommendation #10

RE-ESTABLISH AND ENHANCE EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Re-establish and enhance public education and interpretation programs associated with fish, wildlife and park values.

Education, interpretation and viewing activities are central aspects of fish, wildlife and park management. Individuals who understand and appreciate their natural environment are more likely to take personal responsibility for the care and well-being of that environment. For this reason, the panel has made recommendations for the re-establishment of education and interpretation in fish hatcheries and parks, and other key locations with provincially significant fish and wildlife values. The panel also recommends the re-establishment of fish and wildlife viewing programs, many of which occur within parks.

Education and interpretation may be associated with campgrounds, day use areas, provincial hatcheries and special fish, wildlife and habitat features and cultural heritage values.

The panel heard strong support for the reestablishment of education and interpretation programs within the next fiscal year.

The panel understands public interpretation programs are one of the most effective means of increasing public awareness of, and contribution to, conservation objectives. There are also many opportunities to expand and coordinate interpretation programming such as wildlife and fish viewing opportunities in parks and information about parks within hatcheries.

The number of people participating in fish and wildlife viewing continues to grow. The panel believes that fish and wildlife viewing is an integral part of education and interpretation and that participation results in important environmental and social benefits.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Recommendation # 11

ENCOURAGE YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Through special programs, encourage young people to become actively involved in conservation and recreation stewardship activities associated with fish, wildlife and park management.

The Panel believes that a healthy future for fish, wildlife and parks depends on the on-going recruitment and retention of youth participation. It is important that young people experience and learn about the natural world by participating in outdoor recreation activities. The panel believes that early participation leads to life-long interest in recreational activities, such as hunting and angling, and a commitment to conservation and environmental stewardship. Many submissions to the panel supported this view. The panel supports the continuing involvement with existing federal, provincial and non-government organizations' programs.

The panel also believes that angling, hunting and park use licences and fees should be structured in a way that encourages youth participation.

The panel also encourages the provision of opportunities for groups of young people and adults to participate in fish, wildlife and park stewardship projects. Over the years, many youth projects have benefited fish, wildlife and parks. Examples include the creation and improvement of spawning channels, fish culture projects, habitat enhancements, park restoration projects, and wildlife transplants. Participation by youth in these kinds of projects fosters a positive environmental ethic.

SPECIFIC RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The panel sought advice on the appropriateness of a range of existing and new recreation opportunities. A wide array of such recreational opportunities, including many different activities, facilities and services, has been proposed.

The panel noted a wide range of opinion about the appropriateness of specific recreational activities, facilities and services. Dealing with this range of perspectives and the site-specific nature of recreation activity, facility and service decisions is beyond the mandate of the panel. Instead, the panel has focused its attention on a limited range of existing and new programs, and emphasizes the need for an open, fair and comprehensive process for making site-specific decisions on the provision of recreation opportunities.

Recommendation # 12

ENSURE RECREATIONAL USES MEET CONSERVATION TESTS

All decisions on recreation opportunities, including activities, facilities and services, will be subject to:

- Existing legislative and legal requirements and constraints;
- Provincial government's primary responsibility to protect and conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats, and park values (Principle #1).
- Policy and standards recommended by advisory bodies and endorsed by the Minister;
- Approved land use plans and park management plans, and the recommended provincial outdoor recreation / tourism strategy;
- An impact assessment that is appropriate to the scale, risk and potential impacts of the decision, and includes opportunities for public consultation.

Many submissions related to the provision of specific recreation opportunities, including the appropriateness of specific individual and commercially provided activities, facilities and services. In particular, the public remains concerned about how existing and new recreational opportunities may impact specific sites. It is beyond the panel's mandate to address the site-specific nature of these concerns. Instead, the panel's recommendation requires site-specific recreation-use decisions to be subject to a process that is based on clear environmental conservation, protection, restoration and enforcement standards, and that incorporates broadly-based public consultation.

This recommendation is not intended to place additional legislated requirements on normal government approval processes for routine management functions such as the annual setting of hunting and fishing seasons and harvest limits. The impact assessment process should be established by Ministry policy. The panel believes that decisions should be based on science and consultation processes.

PROVINCIAL FISH CULTURE PROGRAM

The panel recognizes that British Columbia's reputation for world-class freshwater angling is strongly influenced by the Ministry's fish culture program. About 1000 lakes on Crown land are stocked with selected wild strains of trout and char. The panel is also aware that about 50 % of resident and non-resident freshwater angling in British Columbia, and the resulting economic benefits, are dependent on maintaining productive fisheries in waters that are stocked by the province. The panel learned that the Ministry's fish culture program, with its nearly exclusive dependence on wild trout as a source of eggs, is unique in North America

and is widely respected by anglers and other jurisdictions. The panel noted that the fish culture program plays an important role in the restoration of endangered populations (such as white sturgeon in the Columbia and Kootenay Rivers and steelhead on Vancouver Island) by providing specialized conservation fish culture services.

Recommendation # 13

MAINTAIN THE FISH CULTURE PROGRAM

- a. **Maintain the provincial fish culture program as a responsibility of the Ministry and as part of an integrated approach to fisheries management.**
 - i. **Conduct ongoing scientific evaluation of trout stocking programs to ensure optimal performance of the various fisheries. Adjustments must be made for specific waters where use is low, costs are unreasonable or ecological and conservation issues are identified.**
 - ii. **Seek measures to further increase efficiencies in the operation of the major hatcheries including:**
 - **Contracting tasks such as fish transportation and marking; and,**
 - **Contracting or partnerships in the operation of interpretation and education facilities.**
- b. **Transfer ownership, administration and control of the land and facilities currently used for the provincial fish culture program from British Columbia Building Corporation to the Ministry.**

The panel believes that to improve the cost efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the fish culture program, the Ministry must have more direct control over hatchery lands and facility costs. The current arrangement with the British Columbia Building Corporation (BCBC) creates a division of responsibility with property management and physical plant operation decisions made by BCBC and fish culture decisions made by the Ministry. This situation leads to higher overall program delivery costs. The panel feels that the Ministry must become responsible for all aspects of the program including land, facilities and property management. This approach to property and facility management will create incentives that further cost efficiencies.

FISH-BASED RECREATION ON CROWN LAND

Recommendation # 14

MANAGE FISH-BASED RECREATION ON CROWN LAND

- a. Use the *Freshwater Recreational Angling Strategy* (May 2002) as a guide for the future management of inland sport fisheries. Ensure this strategy is coordinated with the recommended provincial outdoor recreation / tourism strategy.
- b. Re-establish fish-viewing programs and enhance these programs as necessary for conservation.
- c. Increase angling opportunities and participation to create environmental, social and economic benefits by:
 - i. Developing new stocking programs where demand is high and conservation risks are low, especially close to urban areas with relatively few recreation options.
 - ii. Expanding quality fisheries on selected waters by changing regulations and/or stocking rates.
 - iii. Working with non-government organizations, businesses and individuals on initiatives to attract new anglers and increase participation by existing anglers.
 - iv. Simplifying, harmonizing and more effectively communicating regulations, recognizing these regulations reflect intensive management and are the result of assessments of populations, biological capacity, angler catch and effort, as well as public advice.
- d. Protect angling and fish viewing opportunities by preventing the introduction of exotic diseases and species into the province through strong government policy and regulations on fish health and transplants, and through enforcement.

The above recommendations are made subject to First Nations access to fisheries for food and ceremonial purposes. The provision of angling and fish related recreation opportunities must be guided by conservation goals and standards, and be based on the best available science and inventory.

The panel was introduced to the Freshwater Recreational Angling Strategy – Setting Direction for the Future, and believes that it provides important direction towards improved management and delivery of

freshwater sport fishing in British Columbia. The strategy and action plan were a collaborative work of a joint government agency and sector interests, and is a good example of a public – private partnership for the management of a public resource.

This recommendation includes fish viewing programs within parks. Fish viewing activities, as exemplified by the numbers who visit Goldstream Park and Adams River to view the spawning salmon, are experiencing a continuing growth in participation. This participation results in important benefits to both the participant and the ongoing well-being of the resource. The former wildlife viewing program included fish viewing.

The panel recognizes that a number of specific issues, such as the Angling Guide and Classified Waters policy and regulations need resolution. The panel heard about ongoing controversies surrounding management policies that affect a number of valuable and high profile salmon and trout fisheries. These waters are particularly attractive to resident and non-resident anglers and to the commercial guides who offer them services. The issues are focussed on maintaining "quality angling experiences" by establishing some form of limits on angling effort. Earlier measures introduced by government have been only partially successful, and further work is required.

The panel understands that the alien pathogen causing Whirling Disease in rainbow trout is now found in Washington and Montana states. The spread of this disease in Montana has resulted in mass die-offs of fish populations and entire river drainages being closed to fishing for several years. This is one example of the severe economic and conservation costs that can occur if adequate preventative measures are not taken.

WILDLIFE RECREATION ON CROWN LAND

Recommendation # 15

MANAGE WILDLIFE RECREATION ON CROWN LAND

- a. **Update and implement the Provincial Wildlife Harvest Strategy, with particular attention to:**
 - **inventory and monitoring of wildlife populations;**
 - **management for the restoration and protection of natural populations levels and distribution within their habitat capability;**
 - **management for sustainable harvest levels of game species; and,**
 - **developing an annual harvest analysis that is available to the public and is coordinated with the recommended provincial outdoor recreation / tourism strategy.**
- b. **Re-establish wildlife-viewing programs and enhance these programs as necessary for conservation.**
- c. **Increase hunting opportunities and participation to create increased environmental, social and economic benefits by:**
 - **Continuing existing and considering new additional special hunts;**
 - **Encouraging additional hunts in agriculture-wildlife conflict areas; and,**

- Simplifying, harmonizing and more effectively communicating regulations, recognizing these regulations reflect intensive management and are the result of assessments of populations, biological capacity, hunter success and effort, as well as public advice.

d. Protect hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities by preventing the introduction of exotic diseases and species into the province through strong government policy and regulations on wildlife health, transplants and game farming, and through enforcement.

The above recommendations are made subject to First Nations access to wildlife for food and ceremonial purposes. The provision of hunting and wildlife related recreation opportunities must continue to be guided by conservation goals and standards, and be based on the best available science.

The Provincial Wildlife Harvest Strategy has a vision to "encourage appreciation of the diverse values of wildlife while ensuring the province's wildlife heritage is passed on undiminished to future generations." Goals of the strategy are to maintain the diversity and abundance of native species and their habitats; to provide a variety of opportunities for the use and enjoyment of wildlife; and to ensure people and wildlife live in harmony.

This recommendation includes wildlife viewing programs within parks. As for fish viewing activities, wildlife viewing is experiencing a continuing growth in participation. Bird watching is one of the fastest growing recreational activities. This participation results in important benefits to both the participant and the ongoing well-being of the resource.

The panel learned about the dramatic recovery of wildlife populations in North America over the past century. Much of this recovery, and the current status of wildlife populations, is directly attributable to the support of a number of specialised non-government organizations. After the critical demise of many wildlife species in the 1800s because of market hunting, it was the co-operative, hands-on management by Canadian and United States governments with the financial support of hunters that restored many game species to the record levels they have reached. It is for these reasons that the panel believes that the continued well-being of the province's wildlife is directly linked to continued participation and the support from that participation.

The panel learned that hunting limits are set below sustainable harvest levels for some populations / species. Opportunities exist to increase harvest levels while remaining within sustainable levels, as recommended by the regional advisory bodies.

Special hunts, such as those aimed at high quality experiences or high economic value to the Ministry, should be developed through the regional advisory bodies.

The panel learned that both angling and hunting regulations are too complex and need to be simplified as a way of encouraging participation. Simplification, harmonization among regions, and a standardized science-based approach can both maintain conservation and protection standards and contribute to increased participation and revenue. While the panel supports simplifying and more effectively communicating

regulations, it must be remembered that intensively managing fish and wildlife harvests at levels that maintain sustainable populations is a complex undertaking.

The panel learned that Chronic Mass Wasting Disease (CMWD) has occurred in farmed elk in Saskatchewan where whole farm populations have been destroyed. The disease has now been found in wild mule deer in Alberta. CMWD is moving west via game farming. The British Columbia policy that does not allow native species such as elk and deer to be farmed should be enforced. In the U.S. experience with CMWD, the resulting costs in lost recreation opportunities and in recovery can be significant. This is one example of the severe economic and conservation costs that can occur if adequate preventative measures are not taken.

PARK RECREATION

Recommendation # 16

MANAGE PARK RECREATION

Develop a Park Recreation Strategy

- a. Update the existing park categorization and nomenclature system that describes the purposes, ecosystem protection objectives, and appropriate uses of parks, and reflects the management and funding model recommended in this report.
- b. Develop a strategy for the provision of recreational opportunities in parks, including direction for acceptable activities, services and facilities in frontcountry and backcountry areas.

Capital Facility Repair and Replacement

- c. The provincial government provide a one-time grant to cover the serious backlog of capital facility repairs and replacements.

Increase Opportunities and Participation

- d. On Crown land, encourage Land and Water BC's support of new recreation / tourism facilities and services outside but adjacent to parks in order to support increased participation, new economic activity, and employment in rural areas. Such facilities and services must:
 - be consistent with the recommended provincial outdoor recreation / tourism strategy;
 - be consistent with land use plans and compatible with park management plans;
 - generate revenue for the provincial government, some of which should

- be dedicated to the management of parks; and,
 - enhance the province's global reputation for high quality outdoor recreation opportunities and environmental standards.
- e. Encourage new commercial recreation services (e.g. canoe rentals, guided hikes, temporary overnight shelters such as yurts) in parks that meet the following criteria:
- Have no significant permanent infrastructure other than trails and other basic public infrastructure that is available for general public use;
 - Have no or low impact on natural and cultural heritage values.
 - Are endorsed in a park management plan;
 - Provide high quality user experiences;
 - Connect users with the natural environment and / or their cultural heritage;
 - Increase accessibility by creating opportunities for individuals to experience the natural and cultural heritage values of the park system;
- f. In special circumstances, permit support services (such as milk and ice sales) in parks that increase user convenience and meet the following criteria:
- Have no or low impact on natural and cultural heritage values
 - Have no significant permanent infrastructure;
 - Are endorsed in a park management plan;
 - Where these services are not conveniently located outside the park;
 - Are in an existing road-accessible frontcountry area;
 - Generate revenue that is returned to the provincial government and dedicated to further park recreation goals; and,
 - Are subject to provincial appearance and maintenance standards.
- g. Permit a limited number of commercial, revenue-focused facilities in parks only if they meet all of the following tests:
- Are in an existing road-accessible frontcountry area, or are an addition to an existing facility or service in a backcountry area;
 - Enhance the province's reputation for high quality and high value outdoor recreation opportunities;
 - Generate revenue that is returned to the provincial government and dedicated to further park recreation goals;
 - Are consistent with the park categorization system and are endorsed in an approved park management plan that included opportunities for public input;
 - Are subject to provincial development, appearance and maintenance standards.
 - Are subject to an impact assessment that is appropriate to the scale, risks and potential impacts of the proposed development, and that includes opportunities for public input; and,

- **Are subject to a business case analysis that assures the venture's economic viability.**

The panel understands that there is a backlog in capital facility repairs and replacements. Much of the park system's facilities are old and either nearing or beyond their designed life. These facilities include basic drinking water and sewage disposal systems. The cost of these capital repairs and replacements needs to be accurately assessed and a one-time grant provided. The provincial government should consider linking this funding requirement to the Olympic bid as a legacy project.

The panel believes that the continued support for the provincial park system is dependant on the public's understanding and appreciation of the values of the parks within that system. The panel also believes that that one of the most important ways of fostering understanding and appreciation is through use. An individual who uses a park is more likely to make commitments to support the ongoing conservation and protection of that park.

To be broadly available to society, the use of parks requires facilities and services. While the panel has echoed the strongly felt need to put conservation and protection ahead of opportunities for recreational use, it also believes that a balance can be struck between conservation and recreation. The panel has therefore recommended that subject to a number of strict tests, recreation facilities and services continue to be offered adjacent to and within parks. The panel believes the priority should be for facilities that are outside but adjacent to parks. These facilities and the associated services can provide both experienced and new users with opportunities to use and appreciate the natural and cultural heritage values of the province's parks.

The panel also believes that some new commercial services such, as canoe rentals and guided hikes, may be appropriate. Such services should be aimed at giving new users quality outdoor recreation experiences. The panel believes that these types of enhanced opportunities will result in more satisfied users who are more likely to continue to support the conservation and protection of parks.

Some intensively used destination parks should include sales of convenience items like milk and ice. These services should be provided only where there is no competition with existing services outside the park. Park users continue to request such services. These services can result in environmental benefits (e.g. reduced vehicle use) as well as increased user satisfaction. The panel has recommended a number of tests a proposed service must meet.

There may be opportunities for a limited number of more intensive recreation facilities such as currently exist in Manning Park. The panel recognizes the extreme concern expressed by individuals about the impacts from such facilities. The panel also recognizes the high level of user satisfaction for such facilities as those in Manning Park, and acknowledges surveys showing that many British Columbia residents support such facilities and services. The panel's recommendation includes a number of significant tests that any proposal must pass before it would be allowed. The panel believes these tests will protect the public interest by determining an acceptable level of impact on a case-by-case basis.

OUTDOOR RECREATION ON CROWN LAND

Recommendation # 17

MANAGE OUTDOOR RECREATION ON CROWN LAND

The provincial government continue the equivalent of current Ministry of Forests programs for outdoor recreation, including:

- A recreation sites program;
- A recreation trail program, including "marine trails", a rails-to-trails program, and the terrestrial system of trails; and,
- Forest road access to key recreation areas, including parks.

The panel acknowledges that general outdoor recreation on Crown land (outside of fish and wildlife recreation) is outside of its mandate. However, existing forest recreation sites, trails and roads are integrally connected to angling, hunting, wildlife viewing and park use. Province-wide organizations and the public have expressed significant interest in and concern about changes to the above programs. The panel believes the continuation of these programs is essential if the provincial government is to reach its goals for increased tourism revenue. The panel also believes these programs make significant economic and social contributions to the province and have special value to rural communities.

Funding for these programs should be provided in a manner that is consistent with the principles recommended in this report.

REVENUE SOURCES AND USES

In general terms, there are three sources of revenue used to support the provision of fish, wildlife and park recreation. These sources include general taxation (e.g. income and sales taxes), user fees (angling, hunting, and camping fees) and contributions (e.g. donations of money, and volunteer support). Appendix 2 describes these three sources of revenue and identifies the specific types that are currently used and some of the new types considered by the panel.

Currently, all ministry base expenditures come from voted appropriations from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF). Contributions are used to a limited extent to support an enhanced level of conservation and recreation.

Recommendation # 18

RECOMMENDED REVENUE SOURCES AND USES

The provincial government adopt the following model for the funding of its fish, wildlife and park management responsibilities.

Funding for Conservation and Protection:

- A base level of funding for conservation, protection, restoration and enforcement is provided by general taxation and allocated to the Ministry through voted appropriation. This will require defining and adopting base conservation, protection, restoration and enforcement standards and ensuring there is an appropriate level of funding and management effort for this base level.
- Conservation, protection, restoration and enforcement beyond the base level may be provided by general taxation or through a variety of contribution types.

Funding for Recreation:

- The costs of providing initial basic public facilities and their capital repair and replacement are funded through general taxation allocated to the Ministry through voted appropriation.
- The incremental costs of providing recreation opportunities, including operating and managing, annual facility repair and crowding costs are funded through user fees.
- All users of the province's fish, wildlife and park resources should contribute to the cost of providing outdoor recreational opportunities.

Additional Funding

- Additional supplies of recreational opportunities may be funded by contributions, partners or volunteers.
- Revenue from *Park Act* permits and a portion of the revenue from *Land Act* tenures for commercial backcountry recreation should be directed to the special purpose account and dedicated to the provision of fish, wildlife and park recreation opportunities.

The panel received considerable input about, and evidence that, the current level of funding is not adequate to meet the present conservation, protection and restoration goals.

The panel believes that increased revenue from user fees is the main solution to the Ministry's budget issues related to the provision of recreation. The Ministry's budget from voted appropriation is now fixed by the

provincial government in the Ministry Service Plan. Additional funds for recreation from taxation cannot occur without impacting environmental protection and conservation standards. In the short term, increased revenue from contributions is not expected to be significant.

According to the principles, the incremental costs for the provision of recreation opportunities are to be borne by the user. This will entail new fees and increases to existing user fees. Non-incremental costs for the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities (e.g. costs to provide and replace basic public infrastructure) are proposed to be funded from the CRF and by contributions.

The panel learned that there is interest in having user fees support conservation, protection and restoration. The panel does not support this proposal as it could diminish the provincial government's responsibility for conservation paid by general tax revenue and would lead to higher user fees.

The panel heard concerns about the current inequity in the application user fees. Currently anglers, hunters and park campers are the primary users who pay fees. Many believe that a more equitable user-pay system is required. The panel believes that all users of a recreation facility or service, for which there is a direct incremental cost to the Ministry to provide, should pay for the provision of that facility or service.

The panel believes that many Park Act permits and Land Act tenures grant rights to parks and Crown land that are dependant on quality natural environments. The ministry incurs the costs for managing these resources and should receive financial support from these permit and tenure holders.

The Panel recognizes that the surcharges on hunting and angling licenses are not technically voluntary and therefore might be considered as user fees. However, these surcharges originated at the request of the users. For efficiency and equity reasons, the surcharges were implemented and administered by the provincial government as an adjunct to angling and hunting licenses. The panel heard strong support for the continued dedication of the surcharges to the HCTF and used for enhanced levels of conservation and recreation. As such, the panel believes that angling and hunting surcharges should be continued and treated as contributions.

The Ministry must define the base level of recreational facility and service supply and identify the costs to provide this level of supply.

The panel has recommended a principle that users should pay the incremental costs of the provision of recreational facilities and services. Revenue for these facilities and services can be collected through user fees or through Provincial Sales Tax or the federal Goods and Services Tax. The panel does not support the dedication of PST or GST collected on either outdoor recreation equipment or a "surcharge" on recreational equipment sales. Sales taxes are not good proxies for use. If sales taxes are the source of funding for the provincial government's supply of recreational facilities and services, individuals that never use a province-supplied recreational facility or service will be required to pay for that supply. Revenue collected through direct user fees is fair, more direct, and transparent, and can increase a sense of stewardship.

Recommendation # 19

IMPLEMENT RECREATION USE PASSES

The panel recommends:

- A "park stewardship pass" be implemented for the annual or day use of park recreational facilities and services;
- Revenue from the "park stewardship pass" should be treated as a user fee and therefore dedicated to the special purpose account for the provision of recreational opportunities;
- The "park stewardship pass" should be implemented in a way that allows for an efficient and effective blending with a broader "recreation stewardship pass," when it is implemented;
- A "recreation stewardship pass" be implemented for the recreational use of a facility or service on Crown Land where there is a direct cost to the province to provide;
- If implemented and administered by another provincial ministry, a portion of the revenue from the "recreation stewardship pass" should be dedicated to supporting the Ministry's provision of facilities and services.

The panel heard that the value of British Columbia's outdoor recreation opportunities is recognized world-wide. Many believe that the quality of our outdoor recreation opportunities are British Columbia's competitive advantage in a global tourism market. At the same time, the panel heard that opportunities to use the outdoors are an integral part of the British Columbia culture. Many submissions expressed concern about having to pay for "a walk in the woods." The panel shares that concern and believes that fees should be imposed only for opportunities where there is a direct incremental cost to the provincial government to provide that opportunity. The panel also believes that where the provincial government incurs a direct cost to provide a recreation opportunity, the user of that opportunity should contribute through user fees to its continued availability.

The implementation of these recreation use passes must be convenient for the user, minimize transaction costs, and be bundled with a range of other permits and licences in a simple yet effective way.

Recommendation # 20

ENCOURAGE CONTRIBUTIONS FOR ENHANCED CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

The provincial government should:

- Implement a "conservation and recreation lottery;"
- Initiate an after-tax refund "check-off";
- Pursue additional mechanisms for making voluntary contributions such as the "wildlife seal of approval" or "environmental stewardship" vehicle

licence plates;

- Ensure the continuation of the Crown Land Account, or an equivalent, in which a portion of all Crown land sales are dedicated to the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund and the recommended Parks and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund for the acquisition of critical fish and wildlife habitats and parks.

Revenue from the above initiatives should be treated as voluntary contributions and used for conservation, protection, restoration and recreation beyond the base levels provided by the provincial government and user fees.

The panel recognizes that the recommended initiatives may be complex to develop and implement, requiring the support of a variety of provincial and federal government agencies and non-government organizations.

An after-tax refund "check-off" is a voluntary dedication of a personal income tax refund to a specific purpose or fund.

REVENUE RETENTION AND ALLOCATION

The public has a keen interest in the way financial resources are retained and allocated. A key issue is the ability to maintain the standards of protection for conservation values. The panel heard perspectives related to fairness, transparency, accountability, balancing public and special interests, and opportunities for public participation.

Recommendation # 21

RECOMMENDED RECREATION REVENUE RETENTION AND ALLOCATION METHODS

- a. Establish a non-lapsing, interest-bearing, special purpose account within the Consolidated Revenue Fund to receive all existing and new user fees levied under the authority of the Ministry in fulfilling its recreation mandate. Dedicate these user fees to the Ministry's provision of recreation opportunities.
- b. Retain the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF) with its current purpose to receive and allocate user contributions for habitat and species conservation and recreation;
- c. Establish a separate Parks and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund to receive and allocate contributions for providing enhanced levels of conservation and recreation, and that:
 - Is an interest-bearing, non-lapsing account;

- Provides a mechanism for dedicating incoming revenue to specific purposes;
- Has a non-government board authorized to make allocations from the trust fund; and,
- Has adequate initial provincial government support to ensure its ongoing viability and utility.

All existing recreational user fee revenue currently directed to the Consolidated Revenue Fund, any increase to an existing fee, and all new fees will be directed to a special purpose account of the CRF. The Ministry's base budget from CRF will be reduced by an amount corresponding to existing user fee revenue going into the CRF, leaving no net loss to the CRF or change to the Ministry's current ability to fund recreational opportunities.

The panel heard considerable praise for the efficiency and effectiveness of the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund. In particular, there is strong support for expenditures on enhanced levels of conservation and recreation not normally funded by the Ministry. In fiscal year 2002/03, HCTF received \$5.5 million in surcharges from angling and hunting licences which, in the funding model proposed in this report, are considered to be contributions. There is a significant level of support for the continuation of the fund. The panel heard that there is some interest in increasing the independence of the HCTF and lessening direct government control. In principle, the panel supports HCTF independence as long the assured funding through the current surcharges is maintained, and there is no erosion of the efficiency, effectiveness and public support for the fund and its operation.

Although not specifically presented in the draft report, the panel has heard strong support for a Park and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. The public considers that many of the HCTF's attributes provide a good foundation on which to model this new trust fund. However, the panel believes the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund should have greater independence from government as a way of increasing trust, confidence, and willingness-to-pay, and thereby augment the Ministry's mandate.

The panel believes that non-government, non-profit organizations are effective and efficient in pursuing funding and other forms of support for environmental conservation and recreation initiatives. Trust funds should be structured in a way that minimizes competition with existing organizations seeking private and corporate contributions.

RECOMMENDED FUNDING MODEL

The above recommendations combine to form a new funding model for the Ministry. Table 2 provides a consolidated overview of the panel's recommended funding model.

TABLE 2

Recommended Funding Model

Revenue Source	TAXATION	USER FEES	CONTRIBUTIONS	CONTRIBUTIONS*
Revenue Use	• Base level of Conservation • Basic public recreation facilities and capital repair and replacement	Incremental costs of providing recreation facilities and services	Parks and Crown Land • Conservation • Recreation	Fish & Wildlife • Conservation • Recreation
Revenue Retention	Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) • Not interest-bearing • No fund carry-over	Special Purpose Account in CRF • Interest-bearing • Fund Carry-over	Parks and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund • Interest-bearing • Fund Carry-over	Habitat Conservation Trust Fund • Interest-bearing • Fund Carry-over
Revenue Allocation	Legislative Assembly – Minister through annual voted appropriation	Legislative Assembly – Minister through annual budget process	Non-Government Board / Trustee	Minister as Trustee; advised by Board

PRICING

The panel's principles provide specific direction on pricing. The implications associated with the principles provide additional clarification of the panel's intent and understanding of

the ramifications of the principles. The key principles that provide specific direction on pricing include (paraphrased):

- Principle #12 – User fees will cover incremental costs;
- Principle #13 – Non-residents will pay competitive market value;
- Principle #14 – Commercial service providers will pay market prices;
- Principle #15 – Setting fees will be delegated to the Ministry; and,
- Principle #17 – Fee discounts.

The provincial government has provided direction that the beneficiaries of the use of recreation opportunities should assume primary responsibility for the cost of providing those opportunities. The panel's principles imply that, in general, there will be increases to existing fees, there will be new fees for existing services, and there will be new fees for new services. In many cases, existing fees are less than the Ministry's incremental costs to provide the opportunity.

The panel believes that the pricing for the use of recreational facilities and services is a key to the Ministry's budget issues. The movement toward a user-pay pricing system will assist in maintaining the Ministry's primary responsibility for conservation, protection and restoration of the province's fish, wildlife and parks.

Table 3 includes Ministry estimates of potential increased revenue from user fees.

POTENTIAL NEW USER FEE REVENUES ON AN ANNUALIZED BASIS

TABLE 3

Revenue Source	Existing Revenue	Estimated Increase ¹	
		Low Estimate	High Estimate
Within Existing Ministry Mandate			
• Hunting ²	\$ 8.0M	\$1.5M	\$3M
• Angling ³	\$ 5.5M	\$2.5M	\$4M
• Park Camping ⁴	\$ 11.0M	\$0.8M	\$3M
• Day Pass / Park Stewardship Pass ³	\$ 0.0M	\$4.0M	\$6M
• Park Use Permit Fees ⁶	\$ 0.5M	\$0.5M	\$1M
Subtotal	\$ 25.0M	\$9.3M	\$17.0M
Outside Current Ministry Mandate ⁷			
• Commercial Backcountry Recreation ⁸	\$ 0	\$0.2M	\$1M
• Recreation Stewardship Pass ⁹	\$ 0	\$0.2M	\$1M
Subtotal	\$ 0	\$0.4M	\$2M
TOTAL	\$ 25.0M	\$9.7M	\$19M

Notes on Table 3

1. Estimates are in millions of dollars. Increased revenues might require up to 5 years before full amounts might be realized. Low estimates are more closely linked to immediate implementation and realization of estimated revenue. Higher estimates are more closely linked to longer implementation requirements and more time to build capacity and realize this higher level of revenue.
2. Hunting revenues include both increases to existing hunting licences and new fees for new hunting opportunities. The existing revenue from hunting does not include the \$0.8 millions in surcharges that go the HCTF.
3. Angling revenues include both increases to existing angling licences and new fees for new angling opportunities. The existing revenue from angling does not include the \$4.5 millions in surcharges that go the HCTF.
4. Includes increases to the existing range of camping fees, including fees related to education and interpretation. Changes may include increases from enhanced services. The \$ 11 millions in camping revenue are retained by the park facility operators, and are not available to the Ministry for other recreation services.
5. The Day Pass / Park Stewardship Pass has a range of implementation alternatives, from a basic fee in high use areas to a more general use fee applying to all parks. The estimated revenue increase is net of initial capital start-up and ongoing operational costs.
6. Current park use permit fees do not cover basic administrative nor management costs. Some of these permits are for the provision of high value commercial recreation opportunities which are dependant on the maintenance of high quality natural and cultural heritage values. There is strong public support for increasing fees to a market value level, particularly where the revenue is returned to a special purpose account for the ongoing management of recreation opportunities.
7. There are a number of general outdoor recreation opportunities that are currently outside of the Ministry's authority. Some of these opportunities use, or are dependent on, the maintenance of environmental qualities, including the province's fish and wildlife resources. The public has indicated its desire to more directly connect the provision of these opportunities with the provincial government's responsibility for managing the opportunities and the protection and conservation of the environment.
8. Commercial backcountry recreation opportunities are currently authorized under the Land Act, as administered by Land and Water BC. The public has told the panel it believes
 - These commercial opportunities have impacts on the environment; and,
 - That commercial recreation service providers should have some responsibility for the ongoing management of the environment on which the commercial recreation service is based.

The panel believes that a portion of the revenue from authorizing commercial backcountry recreation should be directly dedicated to the management of the environment on which these opportunities are dependent. The estimate of potential revenue is based on limited technical review.

9. The panel heard proposals for a general Recreation Stewardship Pass for individual recreational use on Crown land. The panel supports this concept, and when implemented, recommends that a portion of the revenue, equivalent to the estimated use related to fish and wildlife recreation, be dedicated to the management of the Ministry's supply of recreational opportunities. The estimate of revenue is speculative.

The panel received a considerable amount of input on the potential for pricing changes. The panel believes that over time, fee changes can be made that can recover the Ministry's incremental costs of providing recreational facilities or services. These changes will have to be made over an appropriate period of time so that outdoor recreation participation is not diminished and implemented in a way that is consistent with the broad pricing principles.

The panel recommends a re-balancing of the user fees and HCTF surcharges for hunting and angling. The panel supports an increase in angling licence fees and a reduction of the angling licence surcharge. For hunting, the panel supports an increase in licence fees and an increase in the hunting licence surcharge.

Recommendation # 22

FEES MUST BE REVIEWED

Fees must be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure consistency with the principles.

IMPLEMENTATION

Recommendation # 23

EXPEDITE FEE ADJUSTMENTS

The provincial government's endorsement of the principles must include approval to expedite the fee adjustments that will assist in meeting the Ministry's budget reduction targets scheduled to take effect on April 1, 2003.

The panel is aware that the process for changing fees can be lengthy. The Ministry's Service Plan has identified budget reduction targets for the provision of recreation services that will take effect April 1, 2003. In accordance with these recommendations, the panel is recommending that a significant portion of this funding shortfall be made up from increased revenue from user fees. These initial fee adjustments need to be in place prior to the next fiscal year.

Recommendation # 24

PROVIDE INTERIM FUNDING

Interim funding will be required in order to bridge the gap between the timelines imposed for the Ministry's Service Plan budget reduction target and the time required to implement and build the capacity to generate the revenue necessary to fully offset that reduction.

The panel is also aware that continuity of service is essential. Interruptions in service will incur significant costs to re-start the service delivery. Many of these services have special value to the rural communities of the province.

New fees and increased fees must be implemented in a planned and incremental manner so that overall use is not significantly affected. The panel believes that a phase-in period may require up to five years.

Recommendation # 25

IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Appoint and mandate a transition team to:

- a. Prepare an action plan with timelines that is based on the recommendations of this report, and provides opportunities for the Recreation Stewardship Panel to provide comment.
- b. Focus on the immediate implementation of the following priorities:
- Recommendation #1 – Endorse Principles
 - Recommendation #9 – Re-establish Education and Interpretation
 - Recommendation #13 – Maintain Fish Culture Program
 - Recommendation #17 – Retain Ministry of Forests functions
 - Recommendations #18-21 – Adopt funding model
 - Recommendation #23 – Expedite Fee Changes
 - Recommendation #24 – Provide interim funding
- c. Develop progress measures and an implementation monitoring program.

FINAL COMMENT FROM THE PANEL

The panel recognizes that their recommended management and funding model for the recreation portion of the Ministry's mandate is a challenging one. However, the panel believes that, over the medium term and with provincial government support, it is a viable solution for the ongoing management and funding the recreation opportunities that are so important to British Columbians.

The panel also recognizes that a management and funding model for recreation is only one aspect of the Ministry's responsibilities. While the Ministry's efforts to protect funding for its priorities of conservation and protection of our natural heritage should be acknowledged, the panel received considerable evidence that the funding level for conservation and protection is not adequate. The panel heard considerable support for increasing the funding for conservation. While outside of the panel's terms of reference, the message was strong enough that we felt it must be stated. The recommendations of this report related to the conservation, protection and restoration of fish, wildlife and their habitats and the protection of the ecological integrity of parks are strongly supported by British Columbia residents. While recognizing the provincial government's overall budget targets, a dequate funding should be made available for achieving these conservation, protection and restoration goals.

In closing, the panel strongly holds that "stewardship" obliges the Ministry to care for and enhance our British Columbia outdoor heritage. Most importantly, fish, wildlife and parks must be seen as a valuable natural resource and asset. These assets cannot be degraded by government abdicating its stewardship responsibilities.

Original signed by Bruce Strachan

BRUCE STRACHAN

Original signed by Dave Narver

DAVE NARVER

Original signed by Bob Peart

BOB PEART

Original signed by Bob Dalziel

BOB DALZIEL

Original signed by Harry Nyce

HARRY NYCE

Original signed by Aidan Vining

AIDAN VINING

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE - GLOSSARY

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS REPORT, THE PANEL HAS CHOSEN TO USE THESE TERMS IN FOLLOWING WAYS:

Basic Infrastructure

In parks, basic infrastructure includes access roads and trails, and as appropriate or necessary, parking, table, campsite, potable water and sanitary facilities. Basic infrastructure must be consistent with management plans.

In fish and wildlife programs, basic infrastructure includes the major fish hatchery facilities and their associated water, building and other systems, as well as the essential field station and satellite rearing facilities required for program delivery.

Where facilities are provided, all types of basic infrastructure are not required in all locations.

Backcountry

In parks, backcountry includes all areas that are beyond one kilometre from a road (see definition of frontcountry).

Capital Repair and Replacement

Capital repairs and replacements are park facility projects which prolong an asset's economic life or improve its efficiency, in comparison to annual repairs which address the regular upkeep of an asset. Park assets are maintained in a safe and functional state through these annual repairs. Those same park assets will eventually require capital repair and replacement to extend their economic service life or efficiency.

Commercial Service Provider

Any individual, organization or company providing a service as directed and authorized by the provincial government for the reasonable expectation of financial profit or gain.

Conservation

Conservation is any management that protects or restores species and ecosystems, including populations and genetic diversity based on natural processes and the capacity of habitats. In parks, conservation also includes the management of cultural heritage values that reflects the importance of historic human interaction with environment.

Contribution

A contribution is a voluntary payment of money, goods, services or time.

Crowding Costs

Crowding costs are the effects of use that may be reflected in recreational user fees that are higher than the Ministry's operating costs where necessary

- to conserve or protect a natural or cultural heritage value that may be damaged by over-use; or,
- where desirable to maintain a specific quality of recreational user experience (higher levels of use may detract from the quality of an individual's experience).

Enhanced Infrastructure

Enhanced infrastructure includes all facilities that are beyond those deemed to be basic infrastructure. Enhanced infrastructure includes those elements that contribute to the quality or convenience of the recreational use, but do not in their absence, preclude use. Examples of enhanced infrastructure include an observation platform constructed to improve wildlife viewing opportunities.

Frontcountry

In parks, frontcountry is any area that lies within one kilometre of a road (see definition for backcountry).

Impact Assessment

Impact assessments can range from the basic documentation of the considerations and reasons for a decision, through to more formal analyses and evaluations, which may include specific inventories, mitigation plans, and cost/benefit analyses. The rigor of impact assessment must be appropriate to the scale, risks and potential impacts of the proposed development or decision.

Incremental Costs

Incremental costs are those costs of operating and managing recreational activities, facilities and services, including annual infrastructure repair, and crowding.

Market-Based Price or Market Value

A market based price is the price at which buyers and sellers trade an item in an open marketplace, or an estimate of that price in the absence of a market. A market-based price is based on a pre-determined capacity or amount that is set in a way that is consistent with conservation, protection, restoration and enforcement standards, and the targeted type of recreational user experience.

Minister

Minister means the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection.

Non-Incremental Costs

Non-incremental costs include the costs to acquire or designate land, the initial supply of basic infrastructure, and the capital repair and replacement of that infrastructure.

Park

As used in this report, park means all areas managed by the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection under the authority of the *Park Act*, *Ecological Reserve Act*, *Environment and Land Use Act*, or the *Wildlife Act*.

Quality Fishery

Quality fishery refers to an opportunity to pursue highly prized game fish in a relatively uncrowded and pristine environment.

Recreation

Recreation is the voluntary pursuit of an experience in which the participant is seeking, enjoyment, personal satisfaction or another form of personal benefit. Outdoor recreation involves participation in an activity (e.g. camping, hunting, hiking), that may be supported by a service (e.g. guide, transportation service) and / or a facility (e.g. access road, trail, campsite, table), and that occurs on a recreational setting.

User Fee

Any charge levied under the authority of a provincial statute (or regulation) administered by the Ministry that allows the user to undertake an activity or receive a benefit that would otherwise be prohibited. Examples of user fees include those paid for angling and hunting, guide outfitter and trapping licences, camping fees, and park use permits.

APPENDIX TWO – REVENUE SOURCES

The following is a summary of the three sources of revenue that may be used to support the Ministry's management of fish, wildlife and parks. Examples of existing types and potential new types of revenue are included.

- i. TAXATION:
 - Currently Used:
 - General taxation
 - Potential New Taxation:
 - Dedication of provincial sales tax (PST) on recreation equipment or a new "surcharge" on the sale of recreation equipment.
- ii. USER FEES
 - Currently Used:
 - Park use fees (e.g. camping)
 - Licence fees (e.g. hunting, angling)
 - Permit fees (e.g. park use permits, possession of wildlife)
 - Royalty fees (e.g. some hunted wildlife)
 - Potential New Fees:
 - New use fees, licence and permit fees (e.g. park stewardship pass, day use pass, recreation stewardship pass)
- iii. CONTRIBUTIONS
 - Currently Used:
 - Angling and hunting licence surcharges going to the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund
 - Donations (e.g. donation boxes at interpretation and education facilities and services)
 - Bequests
 - Corporate sponsorships
 - Potential New Sources:
 - Voluntary taxation (e.g. government lottery)
 - After-tax (refund) deduction ("check-off")

APPENDIX THREE – SUMMARY OF BC PARKS' LEGACY PROJECT

REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a short summary of the B.C.' Park Legacy Project final report recommendations. It is provided only for the convenience of the reader. Readers should refer to the Legacy Panel's report for the full set of recommendations and the Legacy Panel's detailed rationale.

Many individuals pointed out that the value and importance of the Legacy panel's work, particularly the thoroughness of their community-based consultations. There was confusion about the different mandates of the two panels. The Legacy panel looked only at parks, but included both the recreation and conservation mandates of BC Parks. The Recreation Stewardship Panel's mandate included only recreation, but included fish and wildlife recreation on all Crown land.

A number of people and groups that attended the Recreation Stewardship Panel meetings, or made submissions related to the mandate of the Recreation Stewardship Panel, commented on how important it was that Recreation Stewardship Panel members not repeat the work of the Legacy Panel Project. The research, submissions and recommendations of the Legacy Panel were an important foundation on which the Recreation Stewardship Panel based their recommendations.

LEGACY VISION AND PRINCIPLES. Legacy Project Recommendation 1 pages 10-21.

- Guiding Principles and Rationale.
- Vision for the system

The vision and principles outlined in this section were fundamental in guiding the work of the Recreation Stewardship Panel, in particular the paramount need to protect nature.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FIRST NATIONS. Legacy Project Recommendations 2-8 pages 22-25.

- Properly fund cooperative/joint management agreements.
- Stronger park/First Nation relationships/increased opportunities
- Respect for pre-treaty context

PROTECTED AREA GOVERNANCE. Legacy Project Recommendations 9-17 pages 29-42.

- BC Parks as lead agency for all protected areas in system as a public trust.
- BC Parks own Deputy.
- Update legislation. Consolidate other Acts. Mandate State of the Parks reports.
- Special management agreement with Treasury Board.
- No transfer of parks to other jurisdictions.
- Create a Provincial Parks Advisory Council.
- Create a Provincial Parks Foundation with an independent Board of Directors.

PROVIDING ADEQUATE RESOURCES. Legacy Project Recommendations 18-32 pages 43-59

- Adopt a set of principles to guide revenue management.
- Adopt a system that fits with governance model and achieving vision.
- General revenue to support inventory, basic provision of public access, on-going maintenance, conservation and research, education/interpretation, monitoring and enforcement, provision of management plans, boundary delineation and other core tasks.
- Negotiate separate agreement with Treasury Board.
- Do a detailed multi-year funding strategy that increases the BC Parks budget over time.
- Consider various options: linking portion of gas taxes to funding, green lottery. Annual pass and day use fee, increase present fees, register and sell 'brand and property' rights, other tax shifts.
- Dedicate user fees.
- Ensure BC residents can access parks even if they are poor.
- Undertake a complete review of park use permit fee structures.
- Stiff penalties for breaking the law in parks.
- Parks Foundation able to fundraise and accept money and solicit donations.
- Major investment in Parks Foundation with a one-time provincial grant of minimum \$5M.
- More capacity to effectively use volunteers: Park Hosts, cooperative agreements, EcoReserve Wardens, 'Friends of --- groups', a stewardship program for youth.
- Inappropriate sources of revenue: concessions, large scale commercial development, publicly traded shares, issuance of bonds etc

PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC EDUCATION. Legacy Project Recommendations 33-96 pages 61-99

- BC Parks retain a system-wide planning capacity that is core funded. Require new park categories and management zones.
- Ecological integrity maintenance as the fundamental goal.
- Management planning must be a priority and ecosystem based. More recognition of culture heritage needed.
- Public involvement must be a key feature.
- Develop and offer educational and interpretive programs.
- Prohibit in parks: mining, logging, hydro development and oil/gas development; the building of new roads; large scale commercial tourism; inappropriate use of private in-holdings; military maneuvers.
- Need for a province-wide, cross-government approach to recreation management. Need more inter and intra working protocols in this regard. Parks are a key component of such a plan.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LEGISLATION. Legacy Project Recommendations 97-99 pages 101-106

- Need to thoroughly analyze the recommendations and existing legislation to ensure that Legacy can be implemented.

- Develop a new Protected Areas Act or update the existing Acts.

IMPLEMENTING THE REPORT: Legacy Project Recommendations 100-101 pages 107-109

- Appoint a transition team within government to implement the report.
- Prepare an implementation action plan and budget.

SUMMARY

The Recreation Stewardship Panel considered all recommendations of the Legacy Project and believes that this report addresses the majority of them.

APPENDIX FOUR - PANEL MEMBERS

Each of the panel members have affiliations with organizations having an interest in the management and funding of fish, wildlife and park recreation. The terms of the panel members' appointments dictated their contributions to the panel's task be based on their experience and expertise, not the advancement of the interests of one special interest.

Bruce Strachan, chair:

Bruce Strachan is a former minister of environment who served for 12 years as MLA for Prince George South. His political experience includes serving as deputy speaker of the legislature, government house leader and minister of health, intergovernmental relations and advanced education. He was also chair of the school board of District 57 in Prince George, where he has lived for 36 years. Strachan has worked as a newspaper columnist in Prince George and a daily open-line talkback host with a Prince George radio station.

Bob Dalziel:

Bob Dalziel has recently retired as assistant deputy minister of the environmental stewardship division of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. He has worked for 31 years in a variety of planning, operations and management positions with BC Parks. He has extensive knowledge of British Columbia's protected area system and the geography and resources of the province, and is active in park and wildland recreation activities. Dalziel is knowledgeable about resource management policies and practices, and park administration in other North American jurisdictions.

Dr. David W. Narver:

David Narver completed his doctorate in fisheries in 1966 from the University of Washington and spent 28 years as a fisheries research scientist in Washington State, Alaska, New Brunswick and British Columbia. He retired in 1994 as the director of the British Columbia fisheries management branch. Since retirement, Narver has remained active in the fish and wildlife management field as a volunteer, adviser to governments and member of organizations including the B.C. Wildlife Federation, the B.C. Federation of Fly Fishers, the B.C. Federation of Drift Fishers and the Sport Fish Advisory Board, which advises the federal minister of fisheries.

Chief Harry Nyce:

Harry Nyce Sr. joined the panel on September 11, 2002. Harry Nyce is Director of Fisheries and Wildlife with the Nisga'a Lisims Government and Chair of the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine. His political career includes seven two-year terms as elected Chief Councillor for the community of Gitwinksihlkw, in the Nisga'a territory, and thirteen years on the regional district board. Specific appointments related to the panel mandate include Co-chairman for the Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park Committee, Resources Negotiator for the Nisga'a Tribal Council board for the settlement of the Nisga'a Land Question, and Co-Chairman of the Nisga'a Cultural Artifacts Committee. Nyce studied political science at UBC.

Bob Peart:

Bob Peart is executive director of the British Columbia chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. A professional biologist with a master of education degree, he has also been assistant director at the Royal British Columbia Museum, executive director of the Outdoor Recreation Council and an adviser to cabinet ministers. He is now past chair of the Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia and sits on the boards of The Land Conservancy of B.C., the Fraser Basin Council and the Yellowstone-to-Yukon Conservation Initiative. Prior to joining CPAWS, he was provincial co-chair of the Central Region Board in Clayoquot Sound.

Dr. Aidan Vining:

Aidan Vining is a professor of business policy and public policy on the faculty of business administration at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby. He has written extensively on public policy analysis, strategic analysis and cost-benefit analysis for the public sector. His works include comparisons of the performance of private, mixed and state-owned enterprises. Vining was educated at King's College, London, received his master's of business administration at University of California, Riverside, and his master's of public policy and doctorate at University of California, Berkeley.